



# **AN ANALYSIS OF LOCAL INTERNET RELAY CHAT**

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## ABSTRACT

This study first examined the language convention features (emoticon and typographic) employed by the Internet Relay Chat (IRC) participants. Second, it examined the code-switching patterns and the communicative purposes in Malaysian IRC. Third, it analysed whether the strategies of the openings and closings are transferred from face-to-face communication to IRC. Six extracts, one-hour chat each, from the #mamak channel were analyzed to identify the above. Moreover, questionnaires were administered to five faculties in University of Malaya to support some of the findings. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson's (1974) adjacency pair model and sequential location model were used as the framework to analyze the phases of opening and closing of the IRC conversations.

The findings indicated three main points. Participants employed more typographic features than the emoticon features in their chat. The typographic features found were capitalization, spelling, and punctuation. The pronoun *I*, nicknames, and the initial letter of every sentence were uncapitalized. 17.9% of the spellings were modified by simplifying and extending it. Moreover, 8.4% of the punctuation marks were simplified and multiplied. Participants commonly code-switched the ending particles and three lexicals: verbs, nouns, and adjectives while chatting. 52.1% participants did not greet and 81.3 % did not bid farewell. Only a small percentage of participants greeted (47.9 %) and bade farewell (18.8 %). It is concluded that the typographic and emoticon features together with the opening and closing strategies managed to maintain and attract participants to use the IRC as a mean of communication in the CMC field.

## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini, pertama, mengkaji ciri-ciri bahasa kebiasaan (emotikon dan tipografi) yang digunakan oleh peserta-peserta Internet Relay Chat (IRC). Kedua, ia mengkaji pola penukaran kod bahasa dan fungsi komunikasinya dalam konteks IRC di Malaysia. Ketiga, ia menganalisa samada strategi permulaan dan pengakhiran dalam perbualan secara bersemuka dipindahkan ke IRC. Enam ekstrak, perbualan selama sejam untuk setiap ekstrak, dari saluran #mamak dianalisa untuk mengenalpasti perkara-perkara diatas. Selain itu, soal selidik telah diagihkan kepada lima fakulti di Universiti Malaya bagi menyokong sebahagian daripada dapatan-dapatan kajian ini. Model-model *adjacency pair* dan *sequential location* dari Sacks, Schegloff, dan Jefferson (1974) digunakan sebagai rangka untuk menganalisa fasa-fasa permulaan dan pengakhiran dalam perbualan IRC.

Keputusan menunjukkan tiga isi utama. Peserta menggunakan tipografi lebih kerap daripada emotikon dalam perbualan mereka. Jenis-jenis tipografi yang digunakan adalah penghurufan besar, ejaan, dan tanda bacaan. Ganti nama *saya*, nama gelaran, dan huruf pertama bagi setiap ayat tidak ditaip dengan huruf besar. 17.9% daripada ejaan telah diringkaskan dan dipanjangkan. Selain itu, 8.4% daripada tanda bacaan telah diringkaskan dan digandakan. Peserta kebiasaanya melakukan penukaran kod pada partikel akhiran dan tiga jenis leksikal: kata kerja, kata nama dan kata sifat semasa berbual. 52.1% daripada peserta tidak mengucap selamat dan 81.3% tidak mengucap selamat tinggal. Hanya peratusan kecil peserta mengucap selamat (47.9%) dan mengucap selamat tinggal (18.8%). Kesimpulannya, ciri-ciri tipografi dan emotikon berupaya untuk mengekal dan menarik peserta menggunakan IRC sebagai satu media komunikasi dalam lapangan CMC.

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